



State Capitol | Lansing, Michigan 48913  
PH (517) 373.7946 | FAX (517) 373.2678  
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*FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE*

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*Contact: Chad Wing*

*(866) 305- 2136*

## ***Senate Committee Approves Stamas Bill Changing Sentencing Guidelines for Boating Hit-and-Run***

### **Punishment would now be same as vehicular hit-and-run**

Today, the Senate Judiciary Committee reported by a unanimous vote legislation introduced by State Senator Tony Stamas, R-Midland, which would change the punishment for the operator of a boat involved in a hit-and-run accident which resulted in death or a crippling injury from a misdemeanor to a felony. This change makes the penalty for this crime the same as those for causing a hit-and-run accident in an automobile.

Currently, the driver of a boat involved in such an accident is guilty of a misdemeanor and is subject to a maximum sentence of 90 days. Under the changes proposed by Stamas in Senate Bills 658 and 659, someone guilty of failure to stop at the scene of a marine accident causing death would be guilty of a felony punishable by up to 15 years in prison and up to \$10,000 in fines. Someone guilty of failure to stop at the scene of a marine accident causing serious impairment would be guilty of a felony punishable by up to 5 years in prison and up to \$5,000 in fines.

In September of 2002, 33 year-old Brent Veitengruber of Linwood was killed in a hit-and-run boating accident on Wixom Lake in Gladwin County. The operator of the other boat was convicted of negligent homicide and negligent crippling, a two-year high court misdemeanor, and was sentenced this July to one year in jail.

“This was a tragic accident that had a devastating effect on an entire family. It only makes common sense to make this necessary change in the law.” said Stamas. “I am glad to see this legislation begin its way through the legislative process and I am optimistic that my colleagues in the House and Senate will agree.”

The father of the victim of the Wixom Lake accident, Mike Veitengruber, testified in front of the committee on behalf of the Veitengruber family. “We are glad that the Judiciary committee saw fit to report this bill and begin the process. We look forward to continuing to work with Tony Stamas to in getting this law changed.” said Mr. Veitengruber. “While we can’t change the past and what happened to our family, it will help us in knowing that we may help someone else in the future.”

Senate Bills 658 and 659 now go before the full Senate for consideration.

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For technical assistance, contact Steve Ewers, (517) 373 8880